



## “Living the Encouraged Life,” 2010 FAS Conference, to be March 4-6 at Safety Harbor Resort & Spa

The 15th Annual Conference of the Florida Adlerian Society will be held March 4-6, 2010 at the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa in Safety Harbor, Florida.

The conference will include workshops and seminars on topics of interest to professional therapists, educators, parents, and anyone interested in improving their relationship skills.

Complete registration information is available at [www.adlerflorida.org](http://www.adlerflorida.org). In addition to the FAS programs, participants will enjoy the relaxing surroundings of the Safety Harbor

Resort and Spa. This world-renowned spa offers a wide range of relaxing and therapeutic treatments. Safety Harbor is located a short drive from both the Tampa and St. Petersburg Airports.

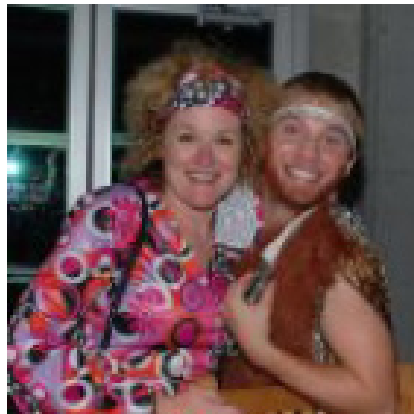
Tim and Florida Higham of The Heart Gallery will present the Keynote Address at 9:00 a.m. Saturday. “Four Therapists and Three Demonstrations (Family, Couple, & Individual): A One-Day Seminar featuring Adlerian Master Therapists,” will be presented from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday. Many other sessions will be offered featuring accomplished Adlerian therapists, including Wes Wingett, Frank

Walton, Dan Eckstein, Kathy Walton, Geri Carter and more.

The conference will offer up to 17 hours of Professional Continuing Education Credits.

Anyone with questions may contact Tim Evans by email at [tim@evanstherapy.com](mailto:tim@evanstherapy.com), or by phone at (813) 251-8484. Room reservations may be made by contacting the Safety Harbor Resort & Spa at 1-888-237-8772.. Those who register online ([www.adlerflorida.org](http://www.adlerflorida.org)) for all three days of the conference will save \$25 on registration.

### Scenes from FAS Halloween Party



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## Natural Consequences are Most Effective in Disciplining Children

By Cameron Meredith, Ph.D., and  
Timothy Evans, Ph.D.

In coping with children and adolescents, "consequences" has become a household word. There seems to be almost universal agreement that people, especially kids, should "experience" the consequences of their behavior.

If they behave well, it is believed that they should be rewarded. If they misbehave, it is believed that they should be punished.

Unfortunately, this approach to the rearing of kids is not working very well. Discipline is still the No. 1 concern among parents today. To make sure that they are not permissive, many parents are getting tougher.

Excluding matters of life or death, the prevailing belief today seems to be that kids should "suffer" the consequences of their behavior rather than just "experience" it. This could be very discouraging to kids as well as their parents and could result in considerable unfair punishment. There must be a better way to raise kids.

We all experience consequences. It is a natural and logical part of living.

Experiencing consequences can be a valuable learning experience. Much growth and becoming is the result of experiencing new situations created by mistakes and then learning from the consequences. However, for best results, such experiences need to be viewed as challenging and fair, rather than threatening and unfair. Thus, parents using consequences should proceed with caution.

Generally speaking, there are three categories of consequences:

### Random consequences

The first category is probably the most prevalent today. It is closely related to the belief that kids should suffer the consequences of their behavior and that parents should get tough.

If they don't do what they are told to do, or don't stop what they shouldn't do, they should be punished. Regardless, the consequence is thought to be justified if the end result is accomplished. This type of consequence is part of the autocratic tradition in which people who practice it always know what is right for other people. Because they know what is right, they feel obligated to coerce kids to behave the way they want.

The problem with this use of consequences is that it is often considered unfair. If kids think it is fair and that they deserve it, parents can get away with it. However, if kids think it is unfair, as they often do, serious conflict is inevitable.

In this day of serious concern over child abuse, parents would be well advised to adopt the slogan, "People aren't for hitting-kids are people, too." What once was acceptable punishment is now often considered abuse, and rightfully so.

### Logical Consequences

These are much more encouraging and fair. Every effort is made to relate the consequence to the misbehavior. If a privilege is abused, it may be taken away for a reasonable period of time but nothing more. There is no intent to punish, but merely to provide an experience in logical consequences.

For example, if kids misuse TV, the phone or the car, the privilege may be taken away. An agreement can be reached as to the time period. However, if kids view the logical consequence as punishment, wise parents will drop it and come up with a new one closer to a natural consequence.

There is a simple formula that can be followed called the four R's of a logical consequence. In order for the consequence to be logical it must meet these four criteria. It must be reasonable, related, respectful, and responsible. If the consequence falls outside the range of one of these four R's that most likely it's not a logical consequence. Making the consequence both related and reasonable is very important. Most punishment is totally unrelated to the misbehavior.

### Natural Consequences

These are by far the most effective and encouraging. The key is to have the consequence closely related to the natural and logical order of societal living with help from Mother Nature.

There is no use of punishment or reward. Kids should have these experiences with trust and support from parents but not interference.

For example, if kids don't eat, they will get hungry. If they eat at regular times, they will feel healthier. If they fight, they will get hurt. If they stop fighting, they will have more friends.

The goal is for kids to discover that they do or don't behave in certain ways because it is in their favor, rather than just to obey or defy their parents with minimum interference, to give their kids the opportunity to learn from the natural consequences of their behavior. In addition, they can discover the wisdom of involving kids in as many family decisions as possible.

## FAS Christmas Party

Members and friends of FAS celebrated the winter holidays in December.

Pictured here are Geri Carter (from left), Rick Lauer, and Tim Evans.



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### FAS MISSION STATEMENT

We support mental health as a public health issue. Happiness is staying connected to the important people in your life. Mental health is knowing what choices to make that allow you to stay connected. Good relationships, not control, are the core of mental health.

We support those principles found in Adlerian psychology and those incorporated in other Third Force Psychologies such as William Glasser's Choice Theory. These approaches are made to order for the development of the fully functioning person.

To carry out our mission, we support the Adler Elementary School, the FAS Annual Conference, and other like-minded organizations and associations.

FAS, for the past four years, has promoted mental health by featuring William Glasser, Robert Whitaker, Rudy Ruettiger (subject of the movie *Rudy*) and NFL quarterback Chris Simms at our annual conferences.

## Accepting Life's Challenges

By Timothy D. Evans, Ph.D.

**“This is where Individual Psychology diverges from the theory of determinism: No experience is in itself a cause of our success or failure. We do not suffer from the shock of our experiences—the so-called trauma—but instead make out of them whatever suits our purposes. We are not determined by our experiences, but are self-determined by the meaning we give to them; and when we take particular experiences as the basis for our future life, we are almost certain to be misguided to some degree. Meanings are not determined by situations. We determine ourselves by the meanings we ascribe to situations.”**

- Alfred Adler (1931)  
*What Life Could Mean to You*

These are hopeful words that give us the foundation for Individual Psychology. We are not victims of our heredity, environment, or the past. These factors may influence but do not cause behavior. Instead, we chose our thoughts and behaviors to meet our goal(s). All behavior is purposive.

In other words, we have more control over what we do about what happens to us than we do about those things that actually occur. I think of the countless clients who have experienced some of life's most heartbreaking experiences: A tragic death of a loved one that could have been prevented with a simple vaccine, attempted murder and a gang rape, neglect and abuse from a parent and/or loved one, overdoses of a prescription medication, and a vindictive divorce with a unjustified removal of the children. What happened to each of these clients was unfair and they did not deserve this injustice. With the help of friends, maybe religion, or competent therapists, they did not let this one single heartbreaking event define them, they kept it in perspective. Each one of them some how kept their courage, did not give up on life, and moved toward others.

Most of us start our lives out on plan A with hopes, dreams, and desires. Then, twenty years later we end up on plan C or D. There are few of us who end up exactly where we pictured ourselves being thirty years ago. We end up with surprises, disappointments, detours, and regrets. Ever since the beginning of humankind, starting with Adam and Eve, there have been human challenges, disappointments, and misery. Adam and Eve's son, Cain, killed Abel, his brother, and fled into exile. Adam and Eve's hearts were broken but they continued to move forward and have more children and live their lives (H. Kushner, *Overcoming Life's Disappointments*, 2006).

It is in our nature to overcome all sorts of human tragedy. We do this by making a choice to focus on our strengths and not being consumed with depression, sadness, and weakness. It is appropriate, at the time of the event to experience these low feelings, but to hang on to them for a lifetime and to move away from others is a mistaken approach. A competent therapist, maybe even an understanding friend, can help someone realize there are other choices besides staying in a state of misery.

In line with Individual Psychology, research shows that humans are more resilient than what we expect them to be. Many therapist and psychological approaches assume that people who have been traumatized by sexual abuse, accidental death of a loved one, crippling injury, or some other emotional setback, are scarred if not ruined for life. Unknowingly, these approaches can even teach clients how to be victims and use the unfortunate event as a way to define the individual, limit his or her functioning, and to use it as an excuse to move away from others. Evidence indicates that human beings have an surprising ability for emotional healing. They will go through a challenging and maybe painful time, but with the proper support and an emphasis on their strengths they can find their way and once again function and contribute as full fledged human beings.

In the Midwest, potatoes are harvested and often put in a dark cellar for storage. The thinnest beam of sunlight, sneaking through a crack in the cellar door, will stimulate those dormant potatoes to grow sprouts. In contrast, we all have a natural tendency to overcome the darkness and move towards the light. This can be facilitated with the proper conditions and inhibited with improper conditions.

Just labeling someone as a having “Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome” or treating someone as a “victim” or “abused” can damage their ability to function. How you recognize and define the problem determines the outcome. This is in contrast to a more positive approach that uses encouragement, focuses on strengths and not weakness, and defines the situation as “unfortunate,” “tragic,” or perhaps a “challenge to be solved.”

When misfortune moves our way (and it will) we could provide those around us with hope, encouragement, and strength to move forward and to function. These challenges allow us to learn about our strengths and find out who we are. We can use our mistakes, misfortunes, and tragedy to further connect with humanity, to empathize, and understand. Or we can use our “traumas” to disconnect and move away from others, feeling anger, frustration, and victimize by the world.

Misfortune and tragedy are here to stay. We can learn how to turn our misfortunes into being the most sorry persons on earth. Or we can learn how to use our misfortunes to give us “a sense of connection with other suffering souls.” The meaning of life is to be help not a burden in spite of the challenges that will face every human being. Adlerian psychology offers us the opportunity to help others function and contribute in spite of the drama that surrounds us all.

(Adapted from: *Overcoming Life's Disappointments*, Harold Kushner)

# Alfred Adler Elementary School Offers Parent Education for Families

By Timothy Evans, Ph.D.

The Alfred Adler Elementary School in St. Petersburg, Florida is offering parent education classes and workshops. Matt Welch, the school's guidance counselor, offers monthly parent classes, followed by open forum family counseling sessions conducted by Dr. Timothy Evans and Geri Carter.

The parent classes focus on various individual topics that help parents develop an understanding of the basic Adlerian principles. Some of these are: the goals of misbehavior, the three family atmospheres, having family meetings, and the value of logical and natural consequences over a system of reward and punishment.

The open forum family counseling demonstrations enhance the understanding of Adlerian principles and help those parents wanting to improve their relationships. These

sessions are designed to educate the audience and family as everyone participates at the same time. The audience and the family are considered co-learners. While the interactions of the family are discussed, the audience is not only receiving parent education, but can also provide the family with encouragement. The problems discussed are observable behavior that most parents experience, ranging from sibling fighting, bedtime, mealtime, and homework. Issues surrounding blended families are also discussed. Both parents and teachers at the school come up with suggestions for improving relationships between parents and children.

Adler believed that behavior has a purpose, and that everything we do is moving us toward our goals. If we can identify the mistaken goal(s), we have a better chance of changing our behavior or redirecting the misbehavior towards a more useful and socially interested goal.

The open forum sessions are once a month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Parents whose children attend the school participate in the parenting classes and the open forum. For further information, please contact Greg DeCosmo at AlfredAdlerElementary@gmail.com.

## Florida Adlerian Society 2010 Board of Directors

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